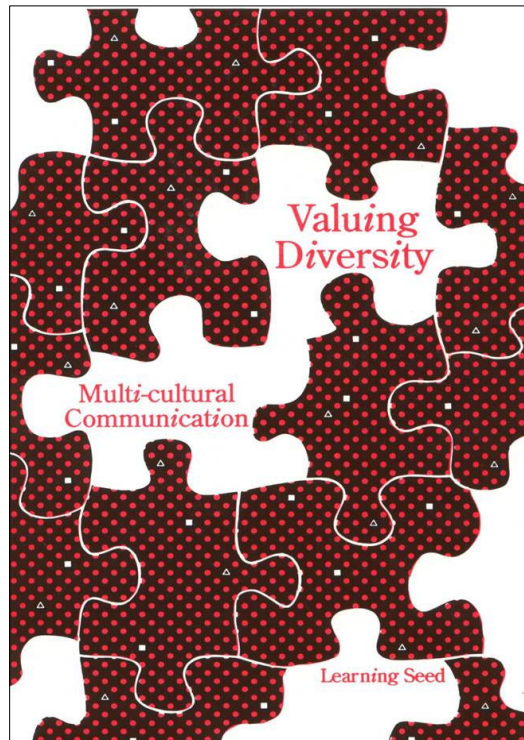


Valuing Diversity



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Valuing Diversity

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The Video

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Learning Seed Catalog and ISBN Numbers

DVD LS-1188-95-DVD ISBN 1-55740-988-9
VHS LS-1188-95-VHS ISBN 1-55740-911-0

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The Program

Summary

We often feel comfortable with people like ourselves and awkward dealing with those who are different. Who is different? People from different cultures or social classes, members of older generations, and those with unusual body sizes or visible physical disabilities.

Valuing Diversity: Multi-Cultural Communication gives viewers practical suggestions on how to decrease their discomfort communicating with diverse people.

Objectives

After viewing and discussing the videotape students will:

- Realize that valuing diversity and dealing with different people is an essential skill for school and work.
- Learn that diversity means differences—these differences may stem from ethnicity, age, body type, or disability.
- Know the meaning of ethnocentrism, that people naturally gravitate toward similar people.
- Recognize that cultural stereotypes and biases can distort judgment.
- Know communication techniques to use when speaking to people with language barriers.
- Understand that differences in body language can undermine efforts at cross-cultural communication.

Before showing this tape

Have students fill out the handout Aspects of Diversity included on page 4. Ask students what the term "valuing diversity" means. Ask why communication with diverse groups is difficult. Give pairs of viewers five minutes to discuss a meaningful experience with someone from a different culture.

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Questions & Answers

1. We probably have something in common with Maria the cashier. Which people make you uncomfortable? (The video shows that age, ethnicity, appearance, and disability create differences that can trigger communication discomfort.)
2. What are stereotypes? What is the danger of stereotyping?
3. Duplicate and distribute Part of my Universe is my Culture on page 5. Have students describe their culture in the blank circles. Are we *programmed* by our culture? What are different aspects of culture? (Ethnicity, religion, education, family, organizations, food, music, dress are some examples.)
4. What do we notice when we first meet someone? (Skin color, gender, age, general appearance, faces and eyes, movements.) Does this mean that appearance is extremely important in establishing communication?
5. Define demographics. (Statistical characteristics of human populations) What demographic information presented in the video did you find interesting or startling? *Demographic information included: Retired people will soon outnumber children in North America. Eleven percent of people in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home. Over a third of the students in school today are either people of color or Hispanic.*
6. Discuss the experience in the bar told by the gentleman in the wheelchair. It is a true story. Is this more likely to happen when only one person in the room is from a cultural minority?
7. Duplicate and discuss Communicating with Persons with Disabilities on page 6 of this guide.
8. Discuss: From the teenage years on, people's attitudes toward growing old are fairly negative. They don't begin that way, as many studies with younger children reveal, but something in our culture changes our attitudes to negative ones around puberty.
9. Discuss these statements about values. Give examples.
10. Values often clash when old meets young. People the same age often hold similar values. Values clash when people from different cultures try to communicate.
11. Discuss the scene between the Texan and the Asian businessman. Would you find the Texan offensive? Did the Texan accent prompt reactions from you?
12. What does the word "ethnocentric" mean? (You place yourself and your ethnic group at the center of the universe and believe other cultures revolve around yours.)
13. How did the two boys talking about the AIDS assembly form stereotypes? (One made stereotypes based on appearance and rumor.) Give other examples of stereotypes that generate fear.
14. The man in the wheelchair objects to the phrase "You people." Did you ever ask a minority to state an opinion for an entire cultural group? Give examples.

15. Give some examples of "positive" stereotypes.
16. The overweight woman tells a real experience of job discrimination. Do you know people who have experienced discrimination because of appearance? Explain.
17. Have students research news stories about people experiencing employment discrimination because of membership in a group. (Possible examples include people denied jobs because of their medical history, ethnicity, etc.)
18. Duplicate and distribute the handout *When Someone Speaks a Different Language* on page 7. Discuss the scene in the chemistry lab. How do you react when you must communicate with a person with limited skills in your language? Evaluate the suggestions made in the video: What other techniques are helpful when communicating with someone who lacks a strong command of your language?
19. Distribute and discuss the handout *Identifying Language and Jargon* on page 8. Do you agree that slang and jargon are difficult to understand?
20. How do you react to a "close talker--" someone who stands uncomfortably close to you?
21. Conclude the class with the same question you started with: What does the term "valuing diversity" mean? How can you value diversity?

Valuing Diversity

Aspects Of Diversity

People pay more attention to some differences than others. Rate how important you think these differences are to people in your school or workplace.

1. Little importance 2. Fairly important 3. Very Important

_____ **Ethnicity**

People find the characteristics which result from a common genetic bond important.

_____ **Gender**

The world treats us differently because we are born male or female.

_____ **Age**

The generation that grows up together experiences people in a unique way.

_____ **Income level**

Whether we are poor, middle class or rich influences how people see us.

_____ **Occupation**

People make judgments according to our work.

_____ **Education**

People judge us accord to our educational level.

_____ **Physical make up**

Our body size and shape--- whether fat or thin, tall or short, affect our interactions.

_____ **Physical and mental limitations**

People who are disfigured, hearing impaired or physically challenged experience the world differently.

_____ **Sexual preference**

Our choice of a sexual partner, or the choice not to have a sexual partner affects relationships

_____ **Geography or Region**

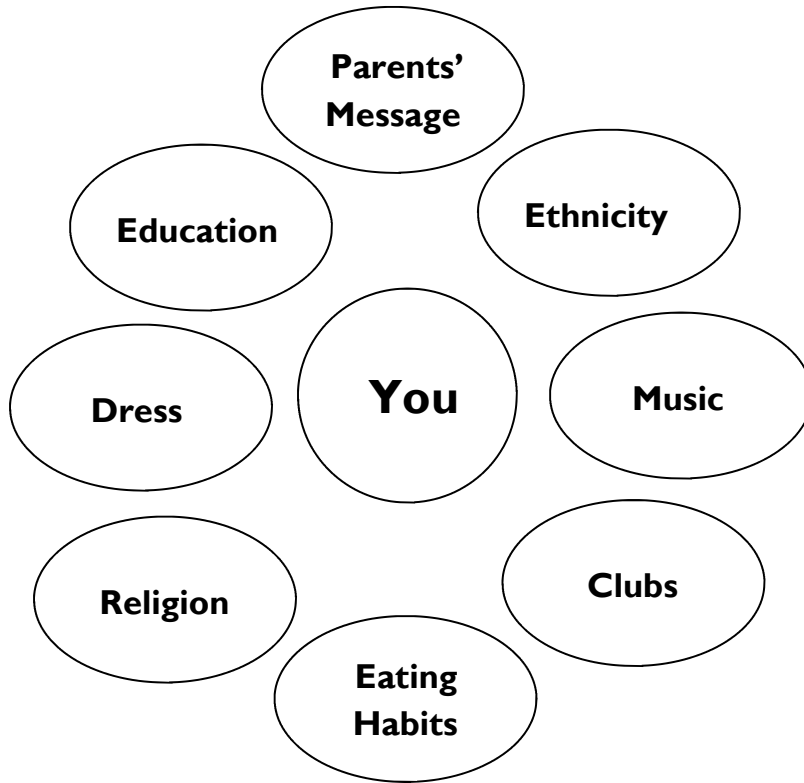
People make judgments based on where we live or where we come from.

_____ **Religion**

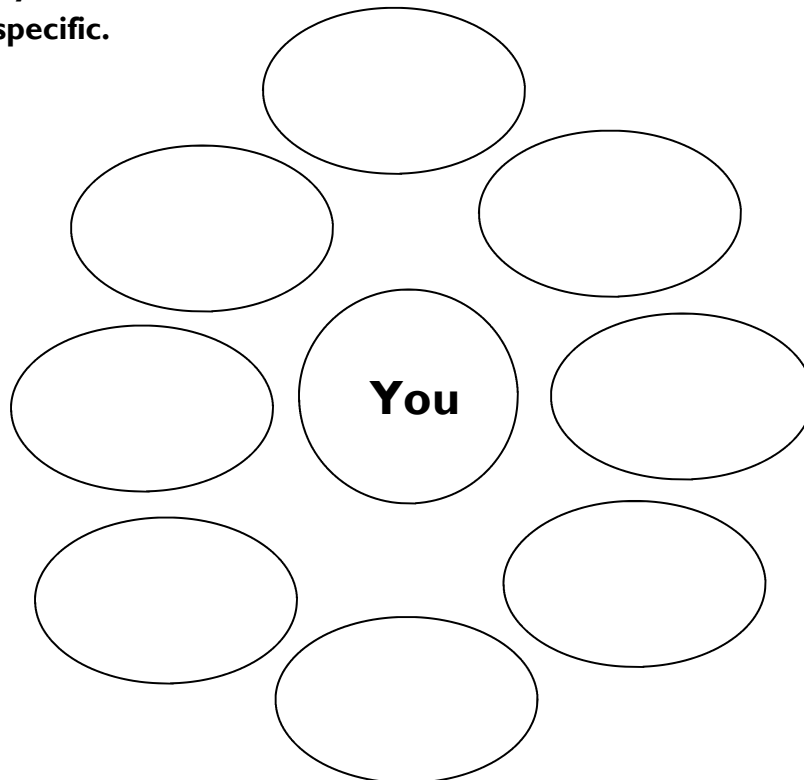
People judge others according to their religion.

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Culture Is Part Of Your Universe



Describe aspects of your culture in the bubbles. Be specific.



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Communicating With Persons With Disabilities

How is a **disability** different from a **handicap**?

Disabilities are limitations that interrupt everyday activities such as self-care, mobility, communication, relationships, and employment. Training and assisting devices such as wheelchairs and hearing aids help people compensate for disabilities.

Disabilities become **handicaps** when everyday functions become impossible. For example, a person who is paraplegic can function with a wheelchair, curb cuts, and self-opening doors. The same person is handicapped by environments not accessible to wheelchairs. The handicap is just as restricting if caused by social attitudes as by physical barriers.

When able-bodied and disabled people communicate, both tend to act more self-conscious and uncertain than normal. The able-bodied person may *verbally* accept the person with the disability, but *nonverbally* communicate rejection and a Communicating with Persons with Disabilities

Studies show able-bodied persons stand farther away than usual, avoid eye contact, and cut conversations short. Such barriers make communication more difficult just as revolving doors make transportation more difficult.

Able-bodied people often are uncertain what to do when with a person with a disability. Should they help open a door? Assist them after a fall? They want to “help the handicapped” and “treat people equally.” Many have offered help and been rebuffed by a person with a disability. So they find it easier to avoid contact with a disabled person rather than risk discomfort and uncertainty.

Persons with disabilities also find these situations uncomfortable and recognize the able-bodied person's uneasiness. They detect the signals of discomfort and avoidance from able-bodied people.

People with disabilities want to get this discomfort "out of the way" and want the able-bodied person to see them as a person like anyone else, rather than focus on the disability.

Here are four suggestions to help able bodied people communicate with people with disabilities

- 1) Assume that persons with disabilities can speak for themselves and do things for themselves unless they communicate otherwise.
- 2) Don't insist on helping people with disabilities. Let them tell you if they want something, what they want, and when they want it. If they refuse your offer of help, don't go ahead and help anyway.
- 3) Don't avoid communication with people who have disabilities simply because you are uncomfortable or lack confidence. Remember they probably feel the same way.
- 4) Treat people with disabilities as *persons first*, acknowledging that you are dealing with a *person who has a disability*, not a *disabled person*.

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When Someone Speaks A Different Language

- 1) Do not shout.
- 2) Talk distinctly and slowly.
- 3) Emphasize key words.
- 4) Let the listener read your lips.
- 5) Use printed words and pictures
- 6) Do not use slang or jargon
- 7) Organize your thoughts.
- 8) Choose your words carefully
- 9) Construct your sentences to say exactly what you want to say.
- 10) Observe body language carefully.
- 11) Try to pronounce names correctly.

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Exercise: Identifying Slang and Jargon

Chris runs many meetings as class president, but some students who are just beginning to speak English have difficulty understanding the meetings. Here are some of Chris' statements. Circle the slang and jargon that make Chris difficult to understand.

Thanks a million for coming to the meeting today. I'm happy that every last one of you made up your minds to make the most of your senior year.

Without a doubt homecoming week-end will be a real blast with all of you knocking yourself out to make it totally awesome.

We have a top-notch team this year so you can bet it will be a cinch for our guys to smash the Vikings in the game Friday. The other schools will be green with envy at our record.

We're pricing the dance tickets so they won't cost an arm and a leg. With our bargain basement prices, it should be a cinch to get a lot of kids to show up. We have a head start on getting the decorations out of the way so they should be top notch. Our advisor Mr. Fields has given us his full support so we really have the faculty and administration behind us on this one.

With exams coming up, I know you all have a lot on your minds, but we really need you all to give two hundred percent to make this year's homecoming a total blow-out. If we all work together it should be a piece of cake to pull all the homecoming festivities.

Valuing Diversity

Exercise: Identifying Slang and Jargon *Answers*

thanks a million
every last one of you
made up your minds
make the most
without a doubt
real blast
knocking yourself out
totally awesome.
top notch
cinch
smash
green with envy
cost an arm and a leg
bargain basement prices
cinch
show up
head start
out of the way
top notch
full support
behind us
a lot on your minds
give two hundred percent
total blow-out
piece of cake
pull off

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First Impressions

When you meet someone for the first time, what do you notice? The five most important things noticed about people in our society are:

- 1) Skin Color
- 2) Gender
- 3) Age
- 4) Appearance- (size, deviations from the norm)
- 5) Body Language (facial expressions, eye contact, movement, personal space, or touch)

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Ways to Increase Your Knowledge of Diverse Groups

- Read an article or book about a cultural group different from your own.
- Attend or rent a film about other cultural lifestyles.
- Attend a cultural event that you have never experienced. Be aware how you respond to an experience with a different culture. Discuss your feelings about the experience with someone from another cultural group.

Ways to Increase Your Comfort Level With Diversity

- Try to interact with someone from a cultural group with whom you are uncomfortable having contact.
- Ask someone who knows how you interact with persons from diverse backgrounds to write a feedback list on your behavior.
- Select a few feedback items you think you could improve on and create an action plan for change.